



November 21, 2022

UIC College of Dentistry
801 South Paulina Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Dear President Timothy L. Killeen,

We write today to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the disturbing racist imagery and tropes, by a professor at the UIC College of Dentistry. There are also additional reports of this professor using racist imagery and tropes in their teaching. This unacceptable behavior has no place in our society, let alone in an educational setting. UIC College of Dentistry prides itself as one of the most diverse public research universities in the nation. Therefore, we expect the school's leadership to do the right thing in response.


Students and alumni of UIC College of Dentistry have expressed to us that racist teachings and the unequal treatment of students has been ongoing for years. A recent revelation made us aware of a noose appearing in a PowerPoint presentation for seven years, which is disturbing (APPENDIX A). This professor has continued to teach without any response or action from the university. Students of color have reportedly continued to be targeted at the university from being asked about their "natural hair" to being called the n-word.

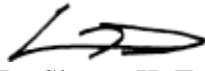
Creating a learning environment that is engaging, accessible, and safe for students of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds is critical for the success of both the students and the university. It must be a priority in any place of medical education to create culturally competent medical providers to ensure progress toward health equity. From your own website, UIC College of Dentistry prides itself on being diverse. Therefore, you have a duty to promote a culturally competent curriculum that produces dentists who will reduce health disparities. The practices of this professor are harming these efforts by creating an environment hostile to students of color and promoting harmful explicit bias in students who will eventually provide care to patients of color; continuing, and even strengthening, systems of oppression.

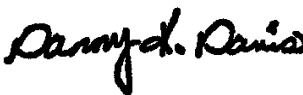
In an effort to gather more information about this incident, we would like to request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. In preparation for this meeting, we would like to know if and when the university found out about the racist behavior of the professor and what steps have been taken in response. We also urge you to condemn the use of racist imagery and tropes in teachings, and engage in a dialogue with students and alums from the UIC College of Dentistry to ensure all hateful teachings cease.

To promote health equity in society, we need institutions of higher learning, particularly medical professions, to eliminate racism at their institutions. Evidence of biased teaching at all University of Illinois systems deserve a thorough investigation and review. This issue can no longer go unaddressed. We request a response to this letter by November 30, 2022.

Sincerely,


Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress (IL-02)


La Shawn K. Ford
IL State Representative (8th)


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress (IL-07)

APPENDIX A

